

SECTION THREE – HUMAN RESOURCES/ ADMINISTRATION

POLICY NO: 3.1

SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

To offer confidential, professional counseling to members of the house staff, their spouses, and dependent children who may be experiencing personal or emotional difficulties that may affect job performance.

II. RESPONSIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the house staff and all Saint Peter's University Hospital employees and their dependents

Through this program, Saint Peter's University Hospital (SPUH) expresses a social and caring attitude about its staff members and recognizes that most human problems, such as marital or family distress, illness or death, financial difficulties, substance abuse, legal problems or other concerns, can be treated successfully, particularly when identified early. Early identification, treatment, and resolution serve to minimize human costs and the potential of difficulty with job performance. While SPUH has no intention of becoming inappropriately involved in a staff member's private life, it is our policy to provide help when a staff members requests help for personal problems or offer help when deteriorating job performance and reduced productivity suggest problems outside of the work environment may be contributing to work problems.

REQUIREMENTS

Saint Peter's University Hospital encourages members of the house staff and their family members to utilize the professional counseling services available through the Employee Assistance Program. In addition, the house officer's Program Director and/or Department Chair are encouraged to utilize the resources of the Employee Assistance Program as an integral part of an intervention program to deal with poor job performance.

Participation in the Employee Assistance Program will not in any way jeopardize future employment or career advancement. However, participation does not protect the house officer from disciplinary action for continued substandard job performance or rule infractions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information shared with the Employee Assistance counselor is strictly confidential.

No records of the house officer's participation or the content of their discussion with the Employee Assistance Program and its staff member(s) are kept in his/her medical or personnel records.

No release of information is made to anyone without specific written consent of the house officer except where required by law.

All information regarding a house officer or family member's participation in the Employee Assistance Program are subject to state and federal confidentiality laws governing such medical records.

REFERRAL PROCEDURES

1. Self-Referrals

An individual employee or eligible dependent may voluntarily seek assistance by calling the toll free Employee Assistance Hot Line at 1-800-531-0200.

Following an initial assessment, referral for treatment or service will be made to appropriate providers in the community if deemed appropriate. Referrals will be based on clinical need, geographical convenience, and health plan considerations.

2. Program Referrals

- a) The Program Director of the house officer's training program is responsible for observing job performance and, when appropriate, referring the house officer to the Employee Assistance Program based upon decline or difficulties in job performance.
- b) The Program Director will discuss the need for improvement with the house officer and offer the availability of the Employee Assistance Program.

The decision to seek and/or accept help is entirely the responsibility of the house officer. No attempt will be made to force or require a house officer to use the Employee Assistance Program. Each house officer will be judged on the basis of his/her job performance whether help is sought or not. No special advantages or disadvantages will accrue because a house officer participated in the program. This policy, however, does not constitute a waiver of management responsibility to maintain appropriate performance standards or to take disciplinary action when necessary.

The Program Director will be requested to provide the Employee Assistance Program with written documentation specifying the house officer's job difficulty, action taken to date, and consequences of failure to correct performance problems.

The content of all sessions is confidential and will not be released to the Program Director or another individual at the hospital without the express consent of the house officer.

With the house officer's consent, the referring supervisor will receive feedback from the Employee Assistance Program reporting whether the house officer has followed through with the referral by attending a consultation session. No other personal or diagnostic information will be supplied unless specifically authorized in writing by the house officer and a release of information has been signed listing the specific information to be released. (See "Confidentiality of Information" Policy, SPUH 950-24).

